

## Reps. Maloney, Hinchey and Nadler call for hearings on effects of hydraulic fracturing of natural gas

Wednesday, 02 March 2011

WASHINGTON, DC - Reps. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), and Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) today sent letters requesting hearings to assess potential concerns with hydraulic fracturing of natural gas before relevant House Committees. They issued the following joint statement about the letters:

"We hope that both Committees will hold hearings to determine whether our drinking water is safe. If federal and state regulations have not kept pace with this growing industry, we need to know before it creates a public health concern. As Representatives from New York, we are especially concerned given that some of the wastewater from hydrofracking is being transported to public sewage plants in our state. By holding hearings, Congress, the industry, and the public would have a better understanding of wastewater treatment and what further Congressional action is needed."

Over the past weekend, The New York Times published the article 'Regulation Lax as Gas Wells' Tainted Water Hits Rivers' describing potential environmental and health concerns resulting from so-called "hydrofracking." These concerns include the inadequacy of sewage treatment plants which might handle the millions of gallons of wastewater that arise from the hydrofracking process, including the plants' inability to remove potentially higher levels of radioactivity than previously known to result from the drilling method. Potential contamination of widely used sources of drinking water could also result.

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Text of the letters follows below and may also be viewed [here \(T&I\)](#) and [here \(E&C\)](#) as PDFs.

New York Times, February 27, 2011: "Regulation Lax as Gas Wells' Tainted Water Hits Rivers"

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/27/us/27gas.html?ref=us>

New York Times, March 2, 2011: "Wastewater Recycling No Cure-All in Gas Process"

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/02/us/02gas.html?hp>

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March 2, 2011

The Honorable Fred Upton

The Honorable Henry Waxman

Chairman

Ranking Member

Energy and Commerce Committee

Energy and Commerce

2125 Rayburn HOB

Committee

Washington, DC 20515

2322A Rayburn HOB

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Waxman:

We write to draw your attention to an article published in the New York Times, "Regulation Lax as Gas Wells' Tainted Water Hits Rivers" (Saturday 2/26/2011). The article describes environmental and health concerns resulting from hydraulic fracturing to produce natural gas. The process, also known as hydrofracking, has the potential to contaminate widely used sources of drinking water and could cause serious health problems for those exposed to the wastewater created during the process. This is a public health concern for the workers at the water treatment facilities, for residents living in an area of a natural gas well, and for those serviced by drinking water that is potentially contaminated by the hydrofracking process and its wastewater. The NYT suggests that federal and state regulations have not kept pace with the growing hydrofracking industry and that the current system of sending wastewater to water treatment plants is not suitable for removing radioactive and other hazardous materials.

In order to assess these concerns, we request that the Energy and Commerce Committee hold hearings on the environmental and health impact of hydraulic fracturing. Internal documents from the Environmental Protection Agency, state regulators, and drillers that were obtained by the NYT suggest the wastewater from hydrofracking contains radioactivity at levels higher than previously thought and that many of the public sewage treatment plants that now handle wastewater are not capable of removing radioactive contaminants. Additional reports have documented the presence of diesel fuel and other known toxic chemicals in hydraulic fracturing fluid. We are particularly concerned because some of the wastewater is being transported to New York State. Public hearings would shed light on this critical issue and help ensure proper oversight throughout the hydrofracking and wastewater removal process.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

CAROLYN B. MALONEY

MAURICE D. HINCHEY

JERROLD L. NADLER

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

March 2, 2011

The Honorable John L. Mica  
Chairman  
Transportation & Infrastructure  
2165 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall  
Ranking Member  
Transportation & Infrastructure  
2163 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Mica and Ranking Member Rahall:

We write to draw your attention to an article published in the New York Times, "Regulation Lax as Gas Wells' Tainted Water Hits Rivers" (Saturday 2/26/2011). The article describes environmental and health concerns resulting from hydraulic fracturing to produce natural gas. The process, also known as hydrofracking, has the potential to contaminate widely used sources of drinking water and could cause serious health problems for those exposed to the wastewater created during the process. This is a public health concern for the workers at the water treatment facilities, for residents living in an area of a natural gas well, and for those serviced by drinking water that is potentially contaminated by the hydrofracking process and its wastewater. The NYT suggests that federal and state regulations have not kept pace with the growing hydrofracking industry and that the current system of sending wastewater to water treatment plants is not suitable for removing radioactive and other hazardous materials.

In order to assess these concerns, we request that the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee hold hearings on the environmental and health impact of hydraulic fracturing. Internal documents from the Environmental Protection Agency, state regulators, and drillers that were obtained by the NYT suggest the wastewater from hydrofracking contains radioactivity at levels higher than previously thought and that many of the public sewage treatment plants that now handle wastewater are not capable of removing radioactive contaminants. Additional reports have documented the presence of diesel fuel and other known toxic chemicals in hydraulic fracturing fluid. We are particularly concerned because some of the wastewater is being transported to New York State. Public hearings would shed light on this critical issue and help ensure proper oversight throughout the hydrofracking and wastewater removal process.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

CAROLYN B. MALONEY  
Member of Congress

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